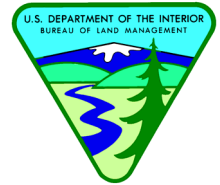




NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION
NOPA AZ-070-2003-8560-1
EA-AZ-070-2003-0002



State - Arizona

County - Mohave

Area - Attn: Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Lake Havasu Field Office (LHFO)
2610 Sweetwater Avenue
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403
(928) 505-1200

Wilderness Area – Swansea Wilderness

1. Type of Action: Repair of Swansea Wilderness Barriers.

Flooding in 2001 destroyed or buried existing post and cable barriers at the end of the three cherry-stem washes in Swansea Wilderness. Signing alone has not stopped vehicle intrusions in to the wilderness area. The proposed action is to remove materials from the broken barriers, which have washed down stream into the wilderness area, and to repair the barriers. The proposed action will also install signs and visitor register. The object of these signs is to clearly identify these sites as end of the road or “trailhead” and only foot traffic should go beyond the barriers.

Description of Activity:

Centennial Trailhead.

The proposed action will replace the lost portions of the existing barrier with a line of 3-foot high, 2-to-3 feet apart, 12-inch diameter wooden bollards (recycled power poles). The bollard/barriers are less susceptible to washouts and damage by vehicles as smaller segments of a barrier are damaged during flooding without a connecting cable. The bollards do not stop motorcycles but as OHV traffic in the area is typically the larger 4x4 vehicles this should not be concern. The remaining post and cable barrier will be replaced with bollards when no longer functional. A new barrier will be placed along 300 feet of northeast edge of the wash on the wilderness boundary to protect sensitive resources.

Prior to replacement of the barrier, the damaged wooden posts with attached cables, and three metal guardrail sections will be removed from within wilderness

area. The debris is approximately 500 yards from the wilderness boundary and partially buried in the sand and tangled in some small salt cedars next to the Bill Williams River. Removal of the materials will be accomplished using by a volunteer crew of 8-12 people and hand tools. If a volunteer crew cannot be found in a timely matter or the materials cannot be safely removed by hand, the removal would be accomplished using one vehicle (truck, ATV or wheeled tractor), a chainsaw, and a cutting torch. Approximately 3-4 vehicle trips would be required to remove the materials. The vehicle would be used to “pull” the wooden posts and cables from the sand. All tracks and surface disturbances will be brushed out. Either method will require one-two days within the wilderness to remove all materials.

Repairing the barrier will require a wheeled-tractor w/backhoe to dig a 4-feet deep by 3 feet wide, 369 feet long trench in the sand. The new barrier will also require another 300’ trench. Other equipment on site will include: shovels, hammers, wrenches, chainsaws, and extra fuel for the backhoe and for any other machinery. The number of people needed for this operation is approximately five individuals including qualified individuals to operate the tractor/backhoe and chainsaws. During the barrier repair the use of tractor will be limited to approximately 20’ inside of the wilderness area.

Camping/staging area for both the removal and repair projects will be outside of the wilderness area in the sandy wash. The staging area may disturb up to half an acre of the wash bottom. Time at the site can require from two - five days for each phase. Up to five 4x4 vehicles may be used to access the wilderness boundary. The tractor will be brought in on a trailer as far as possible then driven in, down the cherry-stemmed wash to the staging area.

One 16” x 30’ wilderness entry sign (on two 4x4 square metal posts) will be placed in front of the barrier. A sign (same size) would also be placed 1000’ up the vehicle route warning of the route’s end at the wilderness boundary. A visitor register box will be placed near the sign. Depending on visitation, at least one bulletin board or interpretive panel could be placed at this site in the next five years.

Swansea Pumping Station Trailhead and S.E.C-S Trailhead

Flooding in related washes has buried the post a cable barriers in other two cherrystems. A wheeled tractor/backhoe will be used to dig the cable barrier clear of debris. The backhoe may go 20’ feet within Wilderness Area to accomplish this task. If the barrier requires replacing the proposed action will be the same as that for Centennial Trailhead. Signs and a visitor register will be installed at these locations as well. Depending on visitation, at least one bulletin board or interpretive panel could be placed at these sites in the next five years.

Maintenance of Barriers

Under this EA, maintenance on these barrier/trailhead sites will be accomplished as needed over the next five years. Vehicles would not be used within wilderness for this maintenance except to retrieve barrier materials, which may washout and cannot be, retrieved by hand crews. Vehicle use would be limited to the area between the wilderness boundary at the end of the cherrystems and the Bill Williams riverbank. Authorized vehicle use within Wilderness would be limited to a maximum of two trips per site per year.

2. Chronology of Events

November –1990	Swansea Wilderness designated by Public Law 101-628 Arizona Desert Wilderness Act.
June- 1994	Decision Record on EA-AZ-054-22, Swansea Wilderness Cherry-Stems Vehicle Barriers was signed.
1995-1999	Barriers installed.
2001	Flooding destroyed or buried existing post and cable barriers.
October-2003	EA AZ –070-2003-0002 initiated.
November 15, 2003	Comment on this proposed action closed.

Note:

If you would like a copy of the environmental assessment when completed please contact the Lake Havasu Field Office. As always, your comments and questions are welcome concerning this and any other BLM actions. For further information regarding this activity, please contact Jill Miller-Allert, Wilderness Specialist, (928) 505-1204(e-mail: jallert@blm.gov.)

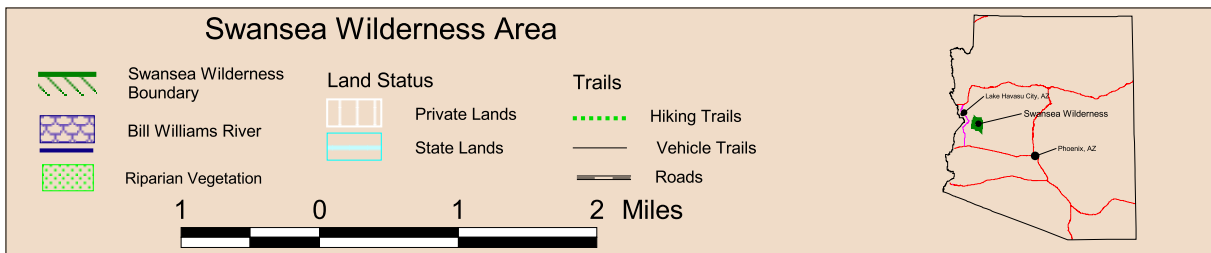
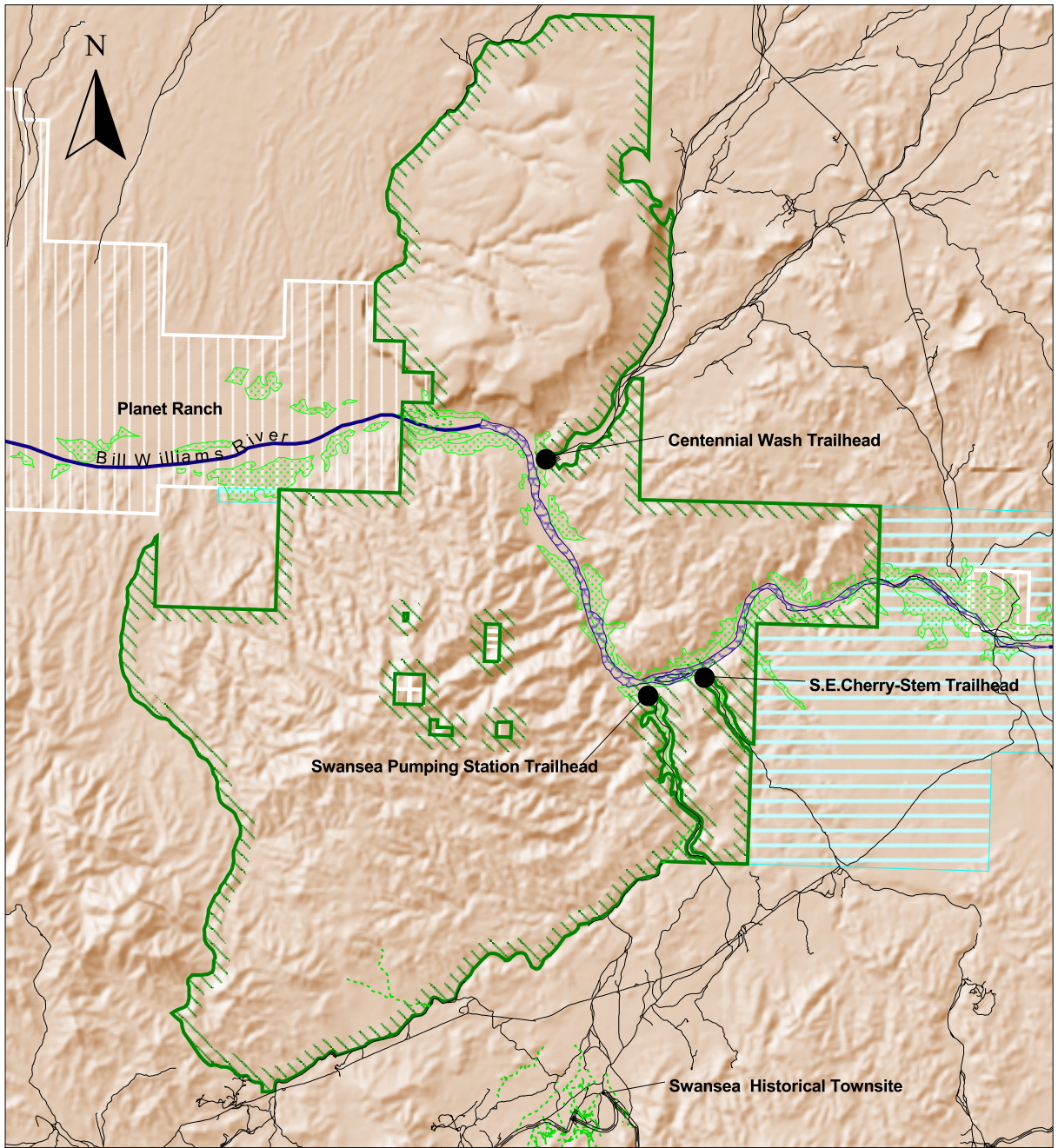
Please help us manage your public lands. If you observe any inappropriate use or activities on public lands, please contact your local BLM office and speak with the Ranger Staff.

//s/ Donald Ellsworth

Donald Ellsworth,
Field Manager

October 15, 2002

Date



Centennial Wash Project Site



Remaining Barrier at Centennial Wash



Barrier Material buried in sand and under Tamarisk, inside wilderness.



Bill Williams River near project site, inside Swansea Wilderness.

